

REMARKS

This amendment is offered in response to the Office Action of December 16, 2003.

The Office Action rejected Claims 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Kitajima reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,015,081) in view of the Mochizuki reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,825,532) and the Muchel reference (U.S. Patent No. 4,525,042).

Claim 13 has been amended to recite “wherein said first lens and said second lens can vary f_A for focusing said close-up optical system” (f_A having been defined as the focal length of the close-up optical system).

In the Kitajima reference, the objective lens 10 is a single fixed lens, so that it cannot vary its focal length. Therefore, even if the objective lens can move in its axial direction for focusing, the range within which it can focus on an object while keeping its emergent rays parallel is very narrow.

It is respectfully submitted that the secondary references do not disclose or suggest anything which would resolve this deficiency of the Kitajima reference.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the presently pending claims are patentable over the cited references.

For all of the reasons above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending



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claims are in immediate condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of the claims, to allow the claims, and to pass this application to early issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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